

Motorized Travel Management:

The Rogue River-Siskiyou N.F. is working to complete the first phase of its travel management planning effort (36 CFR 212, Travel Management Regulations-Subpart B) establishing a baseline forest transportation system for public motorized vehicle use. This decision designates roads and trails as open to motor vehicle use and prohibits motorized wheeled travel, including cross-country travel, on all areas not designated open. The effort generally focused on the existing National Forest Transportation System (NFTS) and making limited changes to preserve a diversity of unique motorized recreation opportunities, while aiming to identify sustainable public motorized routes that minimize impacts to natural resources.

The Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) was developed in response to issues raised through the appeal process that ultimately resulted in the withdrawal of the December 2009 Record of Decision (ROD). The purpose of the DSEIS is to clarify issues, expand on analyses, provide additions, changes and corrections that are responsive to issues brought forth from appellants of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). The major changes are focused on the following areas related to motorized vehicle use:

- clarified Purpose and Need statement;
- clarified dispersed camping;
- incorporated general cross-country travel closure into alternative 2;
- updated mitigation measures;
- revised analysis for issues related to
 - Water Quality
 - Soils
 - Potential Wilderness and other undeveloped areas
 - Natural Occurring Asbestos
 - Aquatics
 - Botany
 - Wildlife
 - Air Quality
 - Environmental Justice and Civil Rights disclosure
 - invasive pathogen (*Phytophthora lateralis*);
- added Wild and Scenic Rivers analysis; and
- map corrections.

Planning Documents:

The DSEIS is available for review on the Forest web site at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/rogue-siskiyou/projects/travel/index.shtml> Copies of the CD are available by request via email at comments-pacificnorthwest-rogue-river-siskiyou@fs.fed.us or by phone at 541-618-2200 (voice) 1-866-296-3823 (TTY). Hard copies of the document are also available at all Rogue-River Siskiyou National Forest Offices. Please contact the above number for additional information.

Public Comment Period: A 45-day comment period will begin on October 7, 2011, with the Notice of Availability being published in the Federal Register. If it is published on the expected date, the comment period will end on November 21, 2011. Comments may be sent via email to comments-pacificnorthwest-rogueriver-siskiyou@fs.fed.us or via hard copy mail in c/o: Travel Management Plan, Medford Interagency Office, 3040 Biddle Road, Medford, OR 97504

Comments received will be addressed in the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS). Implementation will not occur until any appeals on the FSEIS have been resolved and a Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) is published. Expected release of the FSEIS and MVUM is scheduled for winter 2012. Pending any appeal resolution, the MVUM is expected to be effective spring 2012.

Existing NFTS Prior to Decision:

The existing NFTS on the Rogue River-Siskiyou N.F. available for public use is approximately 4,512 miles of roads and 246 miles of motorized trails. The Forest also has about 774 miles of administratively closed system roads that are not maintained for vehicle use but do receive some use because these routes are not closed by forest order. All action alternatives within the DSEIS propose to close the majority of these 774 miles to reduce impacts to natural resources.

Decision Building Process:

In 2006 and 2007, the Forest began the process to implement the 2005 Travel Management Rule, Subpart B. The Forest first began by compiling existing Forest Plan OHV direction and existing travel management decisions. Recreation and Engineering staff began validating existing Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and tabular (INFRA) road and trail data. Staff also reviewed data from roads analysis, watershed analysis, and LSR assessments. In 2007, the Forest began gathering information and suggestions from the public. Care was taken during this process to identify as many key routes for access to recreation destinations, provide loop opportunities between routes and access to private lands. In addition, the routes were filtered to remove short dead end spurs, routes without legal rights-of-way across private property, routes causing excessive resource damage and other resource base concerns. Based on this information a limited number of routes (approximately 5 miles) were assessed for potential inclusion into the NFTS. An additional 12 miles of administratively closed routes were also considered for conversion into motorized trails. Based on information compiled, the Forest initiated scoping for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in 2008. It was decided that an EIS was the appropriate environmental analysis document to address issues being raised internally and by members of the public. In December 2010, the Forest released a Final EIS and ROD. The ROD received over 175 appeal points during the 45-day appeal period. Based on the appeal issues, the Forest withdrew the ROD to remedy concerns through a Supplemental EIS. Starting in the summer of 2010, the Forest began the EIS revision process on the topics described above.

Preferred Alternative:

Alternative 5 has been identified as the Forest's Preferred Alternative because it combines elements of the Proposed Action (Alternative 3) and Alternative 4. This alternative addresses the Public Scoping resource issues through a reduction in motorized use over the current conditions and proposes a slight reduction in motorized use over Alternative 3. This alternative strikes a balance between providing public wheeled motorized access and protecting critical resource values on the Forest.

This alternative does:

- Designate 4,505 miles of roads where passenger vehicles would be allowed.
- Designate 3,160 miles of roads where mixed use of both highway-legal and non-highway-legal motorized vehicles would be allowed.
- Designate 221 miles of trails for use by OHV's, of which, only those trails 50 inches wide would be available to Class I All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs), all trails of a lesser width will be available for Class III motorcycle use. To provide important historical recreational opportunities, this alternative proposes to convert 10 miles of existing routes into motorized trails and adds approximately 3 miles of user created routes to the NFTS. Overall, this alternative reduces motorized trail opportunities by 25 miles.
- Designate continued use of the existing Woodruff play area near Prospect.
- Prohibit motorized use on all other routes and areas not designated open, which will close approximately 781 miles of existing NFTS system roads and approximately 275,000 acres of cross-country travel.

Other Attributes of this Alternative:

Valid Uses Exempt from the Travel Management Rule: Any activities associated with contract, permit, lease, notice-level mining activities, or other written authorization, is exempt from designation under the Travel Management Rule. Access for permitted activities on National Forest System lands is independent from general public access. Individuals or groups with special permits are allowed to conduct their business according to conditions outlined in their permits. If a permit does not stipulate exemptions to the Forest's travel regulations, the general travel regulations will apply

Seasonal and Distance Restrictions: Seasons of allowed use and distance restrictions currently existing on the Forest are also incorporated into Alternative 5. These restrictions are subject to change and are needed for a variety of considerations, including wildlife avoidance, wildlife winter range, elk calving areas, protection of fragile soils and meadows. Refer to the mitigation measures located at II-45 to 54 and Appendices B & E of the DSEIS for specific information concerning these restrictions.

Dispersed Camping: It is well recognized that National Forests have historically provided camping opportunities outside of developed campgrounds. Under Alternative 5, motor vehicle travel would not be allowed off any designated route, except to access an

existing dispersed campsite not to exceed 300 feet from centerline either side of the designated route. Use of established routes to existing sites would be required. Additional site-specific closures and seasonal restrictions (such as emergency fire closures or where unexpected resource damage is occurring) may be implemented on a case-by-case basis for management, wildlife, and resource protection through authorized forest orders.

Protection of Inventoried Roadless and Wilderness Areas: Alternative 5 does not propose any motorized route construction in these areas.

Access to Private Land: Alternative 5 does not designate public motorized routes to or through private lands where the Forest does not have a right-of-way, nor does it change existing right-of-way access for adjacent private landowners.

Decommissioning Unauthorized Routes: None of the Action Alternatives propose any route decommissioning. Decommissioning would need to be identified in a future project, analyzed with opportunities for public involvement and approved through a separate decision process.

New Construction: Additional Environmental Analysis may be required for proposed new construction or maintenance activities needed prior to some routes being available for public motorized use. The Final SEIS and ROD will identify those routes made available immediately with the publishing of the MVUM while other routes will be added to the MVUM once construction and maintenance activities occur that will bring these routes into compliance with Forest Service road or trail standards.

Fuel-wood Gathering, Hunting or Big Game Retrieval: Vehicles will not be allowed to leave the designated transportation system to travel cross country for these purposes.

Parking off Road: Authorized parking would only be allowed along-side of open roads, not to exceed 20 feet, from the edge of the road surface. Parking on the side of the road may not damage the land, vegetation, or streams and no vegetation may be cut.